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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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Next 1 Page(s) In Document Exempt

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

29 December 1959

DAILY BRIEF

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

OK USSR: The removal of Yury Maksarev as head of the State Scientific-Technical Committee suggests that this committee has run into difficulties in carrying out its part of the industrial automation and mechanization program called for at last June's party central committee meeting. A number of specific measures under this program were to have been completed by this time, and the lack of progress reports also suggests that the program may be lagging. Maksarev has been replaced by Konstantin Petukhov, who has been serving as chairman of the Moscow sovnarkhoz (council of national economy). [REDACTED]

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

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OK Afghanistan: With the death on 25 December of elder statesman Shah Mahmud, uncle of the King and of Prime Minister Daud, the Afghan Government has lost an influential contact with the country's Pushtoon tribes. The government will view this loss as untimely, since it is facing mounting opposition to its modernization policies and is attempting to prevent the spread of unrest to the major tribes.

ND Laos: [Premier Phoui's meeting with the King on 27 December in an effort to resolve the current political crisis proved inconclusive. The King apparently offered to rename Phoui as head of a provisional government which would include some members of the young reformist group (CDNI). The King also insisted that the National Assembly agree that its mandate had lapsed. Phoui anticipates some difficulty in persuading his political followers to accept this solution.]

Page 4)

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

25X1

Chief of Soviet State Scientific-Technical Committee Replaced

[The removal of Yury Maksarev as head of the USSR State Scientific-Technical Committee suggests that this committee has run into difficulties in carrying out its part of the industrial automation and mechanization program called for at last June's party central committee meeting. The plenum had ordered a series of specific measures designed to create an environment within which all participants in Soviet industry--from the lowest worker to Gosplan officials--would find technological advances personally desirable and profitable.]

[The success of this program is important for the fulfillment of industrial output goals for 1965 and for the achievement of significant progress in "catching up with the West." Many of the specific measures were scheduled to be drafted by the end of 1959 or earlier, and some plans may have been worked out. However, thus far these deadlines have passed without any public recognition, which suggests that the program may be lagging.]

[If the removal of Maksarev is, in fact, connected with a lag in the automation program, it suggests that the Soviet leaders are giving prompt and continuous attention to its progress and have no intention of allowing a default in the program. A default did occur in a similar program launched in 1955 and may have been a contributing factor in the abandonment of the Sixth Five-Year Plan in 1957.] [REDACTED]

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Afghan Government Loses Influential Contact With
Pushtoon Tribes

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[REDACTED]
The Afghan Government has lost an influential contact with the country's Pushtoon tribes with the death of elder statesman Shah Mahmud, uncle of the King and Prime Minister Daud. Shah Mahmud had more prestige among the tribes than any other member of the royal family and, although he had been much less active in government affairs since Daud replaced him as prime minister in 1953, he helped placate tribal opposition to Daud's policies.

The Daud government will view his loss as untimely, since its modernization policies are meeting mounting resistance. The tribes fear that road improvements in their territory will be used to extend the government's control over them. This fear has apparently been a main reason for the increasingly frequent and serious tribal incidents that began with the killing of a district official near the Pakistani border in December 1958.

Opposition apparently has become more widespread since the government began last August to encourage women to appear in public without the veil, its boldest social reform to date. The resulting antigovernment riots in Kandahar on 21 December are probably viewed by Daud as a serious challenge to his control.

Daud very likely intends, however, to press ahead with his modernization policies, believing that to give in to the country's conservative religious leaders or to allow Afghanistan's Pushtoon tribes to remain beyond the government's control would ultimately lead to the downfall of the royal family and to intervention by foreign powers.

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Laotian Political Crisis

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[Premier Phoui saw King Savang on 27 December in an effort to resolve the current political crisis, but the meeting was inconclusive. The King is reported to have insisted that the National Assembly deputies should publicly admit that the assembly's mandate lapsed on 25 December. This accomplished, Savang would rename Phoui as the head of a provisional government based on the premier's present all conservative cabinet. The King added, however, that as a "conciliatory gesture," Phoui should allow the reformist Committee for Defense of National Interests (CDNI) to reenter the government "at once."

Phoui anticipates difficulty in getting the assembly deputies of his conservative Rally of the Lao People (RLP) to admit publicly that they had erroneously interpreted the Constitution and a 1957 electoral law in an effort to continue parliamentary government after 25 December. While Phoui can be expected to continue to maneuver to salvage as much of his position as is practicable, he is in a difficult position. He remains under the threat of military action by Generals Ouane and Phoumi, who are leading CDNI members, and with the King now openly prescribing a solution which substantially meets CDNI demands, the premier seems to have little choice but to find some face-saving means of acceding to their terms.

While constitutional matters have been in the forefront of the dispute between Phoui and the CDNI, the crisis stems basically from the efforts of the young CDNI activists to displace the older conservatives, who represent a few powerful clans, as the ruling elite of Laos. The CDNI accuses the conservatives of corruption and a lack of dynamism in meeting the serious problems facing the government. The conservatives, on the other hand, claim the young reformists are brash and inexperienced and tend to take ill-considered actions.] [REDACTED]

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